

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability

York a Sustainable City Tackling Fuel Poverty

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight the need for specific targeted resources to deliver against the Council's Climate Change Framework and Action Plan and to address fuel poverty in the city.

Background

2. Members continue to highlight their ambition for York to be known as a Leading Environmentally Friendly City. The aspiration is set out in the City's Climate Change Framework and Action Plan, with challenging commitments and targets (adopted by the Council and 'Without Walls' (WoW) in 2010).
3. Sustainability is also a key element of the "*Protect the Environment*" chapter of the Council Plan and work to address fuel poverty is an important part of economic agenda for the city. The Fairness Commission report of September 2012 also drew attention to Fuel Poverty issues in the city, one of their "*ideas for action*" was:

HH17 Continue to increase the energy efficiency of fuel-poor households' homes; consider incentivising behaviour change, e.g. through energy bill rebates; and enforcement activity in the private rented sector.

Further action

4. At a time where there is an increasing focus on rising energy costs, there is a greater potential to link energy efficiency / saving measures (which necessarily reduce carbon emissions) with a focus on tackling fuel poverty.

5. Tackling Climate Change and reducing Fuel Poverty are potentially highly complementary and over recent years measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes across the City have been promoted through joint working between the sustainability and housing adaptations teams and Yorkshire Energy Partnership.
6. Members will be aware of the budget position that CES is required to find a saving (or additional income) of £2.9M over the period 2012/13 – 2013/14.
7. The Council's current Sustainability and Carbon / Energy management team, of 3 fte's and the Housing Standards and Adaptations team (0.5 fte dedicated to this area of work) struggles to balance the need for delivering against the Council's own targets with taking a wider city leadership role.
8. The Council has stated commitments to:
 - Local low carbon / renewable energy generation
 - Reducing CO2 emissions across the city, working with communities and business
 - Improving energy efficiency, and tackling fuel poverty,
9. It is therefore essential that staffing resource is enhanced with temporary additional capacity to drive the delivery of this critical agenda.

Options

10. It is important that there is a City wide focus, which will involve working across the council and with partners and securing external funding to deliver specific objectives:

Local low carbon / renewable energy generation

11. Recent studies have highlighted the potential for this in York. Detailed work is now need to :
 - Produce a heat map for the city to guide a coordinated approach that maximises opportunities for large-scale Low Carbon Renewable Energy (LCRE) District Heat Networks (DHNs)

- Undertake a number of feasibility studies (probably 3 based on heat mapping work) for potential LCRE DHNs, and
 - Undertake detailed feasibility study and business case preparation for a potential LCRE DHNs – including soft market testing.
12. On completion, this work should provide the opportunity for the city to attract investment and / or identify the funding opportunity to accelerate the development of LCRE / DHNs across the city. This could be through the creation of a local Energy Services Company (ESCo). Without mapping and a detailed feasibility study to determine the viability of potential opportunities, it will be very difficult for York to lever in investors / and or funding.

Reducing CO2 emissions across the city - working with communities and business

13. A number of different projects have been run in York working with communities including the Green Neighbourhood Challenge which came to an end in March 2012, and the Good Life project in New Earswick. These were externally funded and externally delivered.
14. For communities not directly involved in these projects support has been limited to telephone and online advice and the occasional presentation at ward meetings.
15. Currently CYC offers advice to businesses through YEP who have recently launched the Investors in the Environment accreditation scheme
http://www.yorkshireenergypartnership.org.uk/index.php?route=page/view&page_id=91
16. Additional resource here would be directed at an enhanced service which should lead to more action being taken by businesses and communities to reduce energy costs, alleviate fuel poverty; support growth in local businesses and steadily reduce the city's carbon emissions.

Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty

17. Additional work needs to be undertaken to establish how best to combine energy efficiency advice that directly impacts on tackling Fuel Poverty. Options are likely to include:

- Report to Cabinet in May 2013 on a preferred way forward to maximise the Green Deal in York
 - Explore in house opportunities for enhanced green deal / energy efficiency services to maximise the amount of Green Deal Packages offered in the city and explore possible income generation opportunities linked to the Green Deal and ECO funding.
 - Consider links to Local Low Carbon / Renewable energy generation and investigation of options for the establishment of a community interest ESCo.
18. A further report will be brought forward to highlight the specific opportunities and seek member guidance on priorities.

Analysis

19. Progress against existing council priorities in the Climate Change framework and action plan has not delivered against members expectations for City wide action.
20. The actions outlined above offer a means of addressing this concern with targeted action. An initial investment via the Economic Infrastructure fund could provide the potential for all options to become self funding through return on investment opportunities or fee based payback.

Council Plan

21. The options outlined in the report have the potential to contribute to the following Council Plan objectives: Protect the Environment; Protect Vulnerable People; create jobs and grow the economy and Build Stronger Communities.

Implications

- **Financial:** There are no direct financial implications as a consequence of this report. The subsequent report referred to will set out the business case for additional investment.
- **Human Resources (HR):** There are no direct HR implications
- **Equalities:** There are no direct equalities implications

- **Legal::** There are no direct legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder:** There are no direct crime and disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT):** There are no direct ICT implications
- **Property:** There are no direct property implications
- **Other:** There are no other direct implications

Risk Management

22. The options highlighted above are intended to reduce the reputational risk to the authority of not taking sufficient action in working towards becoming a Fair and Inclusive, Leading Environmentally Friendly City.

Recommendations

23. Cabinet are asked to note the report, highlighting the delivery issues factored against stated ambitions, and to consider additional investment in Sustainability and tackling Fuel Poverty, once the detail of the budget is agreed. More detailed proposals will be brought forward to Cabinet seeking approval for temporary additional funding from the Economic Infrastructure Fund to secure the staff resource necessary to deliver on the sustainability and fuel poverty agenda for the City.

Reason: To improve the council's response to the Sustainability and Fuel Poverty Challenges facing the City.

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Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all		All	✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Climate Change Framework and Action Plan - 2010
Fairness Commission Report - Sept 2012

Annexes: None